

## ***Delphinium viridescens* Leiberg**

Wenatchee larkspur

Ranunculaceae (Buttercup family)

**Status:** State Threatened, USFWS Species of Concern

**Rank:** G2S2

**General Description:** A stout perennial, 2-4 feet tall, with a heavy rootstock. The stem is hollow. The lower leaves are approximately 4 inches broad and are divided into 3-5 main lobes, each further dissected. The upper leaves are linear and entire or linearly lobed. The diagnostic features include dense yellow hairs on the upper stem and flower cluster and yellowish to purple petals, and purplish sepals that are predominantly streaked with yellow. The long spur of the flowers is generally reddish-purple, although some are pale greenish-yellow. The fruits are ¼ to ½ inch long and the chocolate-colored seeds are about ⅛ inch long.

**Identification Tips:** *Delphinium viridescens* is one of a group of tall *Delphinium* species that occur in the Wenatchee Mountains. *D. viridescens* most closely resembles *D. multiplex*, but may be distinguished using the following characters: *D. viridescens* is typically 3-5 ft. tall; sepals are iridescent purplish-yellow or greenish-yellow; and in some instances, the degree of basal and cauline leaf dissection has been observed to be greater in *D. viridescens*, although immature specimens of *D. viridescens* and *D. multiplex* cannot readily be distinguished on this character.

**Phenology:** Peak anthesis occurs during mid-summer (July). Fruits mature and begin dispersal by late September.

**Range:** Local endemic of the Wenatchee Mountains of WA, in the Eastern Cascades physiographic province. The known range of *D. viridescens* extends from near Leavenworth, Chelan County southward to the Liberty area in Kittitas County.

**Habitat:** This species occurs at elevations from 1800 to 4200 feet, in moist meadows, moist microsites in open coniferous forests, springs, seeps and riparian areas. All sites have surface water or saturated upper soil profiles into early summer. Habitats are usually moderately poorly to poorly drained and are silty - to clayey-loams in texture. Community composition and structure are variable between sites.

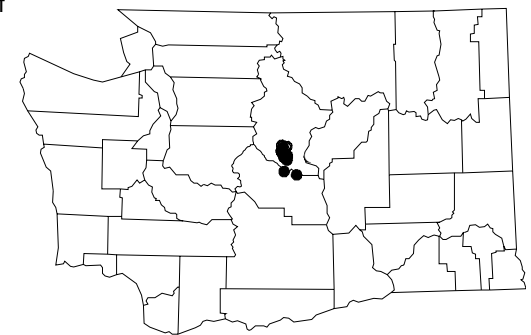
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Known distribution of  
*Delphinium*  
*viridescens* in  
Washington



● Current (1980+)  
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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**Ecology:** The species most commonly occurs in seasonally wet openings, aspen groves and hardwood thickets associated with such openings. Larger sites were probably maintained by a relatively high water table. Fire may have played a role in creating, enlarging and maintaining these openings.

**State Status Comments:** The species is confined to a small total range and apparently a very specific set of habitat conditions.

**Inventory Needs:** Appropriate habitats within the range of this species should continue to be inventoried.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Subdivision and subsequent development of rural residences represent a major threat to this species. Hydrologic changes resulting from development and associated road construction also pose a significant threat. Timber harvesting and grazing pose localized threats for some populations.

### **References:**

Croft, L.K., W.R. Owen and J.S. Shelly. 1997. Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project Analysis of Vascular Plants.

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. 1964. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 2: Salicaceae to Saxifragaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 597 pp.

